(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) whether Government have taken any action for redressal of objections raised in the report; and

(d) if so, the details of the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Comptroller & Auditor General of India has in its recent report mentioned about unsatisfactory performance of MARR Village Public Telephones (VPTs).

(c) and (d) Decision has been taken to replace all the 200751 MARR VPTs in a phased manner by 2004-05. 54971 MARR VPTs have already been replaced upto 31.03.2003.

Privacy laws

414. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that cell phone location-services raise privacy concerns;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether there are any specific privacy laws in India through which phone data can be obtained by people not entitled to access; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (d) Sir, the Licences for providing Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) in the country have been granted under section 4 of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. The terms and conditions of the said licence adequately ensure the privacy of a CMTS subscriber and provide that only authorized Government agencies are permitted to monitor the telecommunication traffic.

Moreover under 'cell phone location services' being provided by some of the Service Providers at present, the location of the nearest

base station to which the subscriber is linked at the given point of time may be displayed on the handset of the subscriber for his information. This service is not acting as a tracker to monitor the exact location or movement of the subscriber. This service is useful to the subscriber as in case of emergency, when the subscriber is in an unknown area, he can get help from Police, Ambulance or Chemist etc. with the aid of location based services.

CAG report and unused telecom equipment

415. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent CAG report stating that telecom equipment worth Rs. 100 crores are lying unused;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the action taken thereon, if any;

(c) whether Salem-Coimbatore route was not commissioned because of defective microwave equipment;

(d) if so, the action taken to rectify it;

(e) whether certain equipment was purchased while there was no requirement; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken to fix the responsibility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Details of unutilized equipments are given in the Statement (*See* below). The unutilized equipment is being used/being diverted to other circles for utilization.

(c) In Salem-Tiruppur section of Salem-Coimbatore route, some modules became faulty after commissioning. As regards Tiruppur-Coimbatore section, equipment is under installation and is expected to be commissioned during this financial year.

(d) the faulty modules are being repaired through the manufacturer.